

**CLAIMS**

1. A method of providing user modeling in media delivery networks, wherein a set of applications ( $A_1, \dots, A_n$ ) are adapted to exchange usage data by means of at least one user modeling server (UMS), the method including the step of associating with said user modeling server (UMS) a function for regulating exchange of usage data between any of a first application and a second application in said set ( $A_1, \dots, A_n$ ), wherein said function defines:
  - whether said usage data are provided by said first application to said second application, and
  - a degree of trust acknowledged by said second application to the provided usage data.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein said usage data include
  - user data related to the registered users and their profiles, and
  - feedback data concerning the users' behavior.
3. The method of claim 2, further including the step of providing in said user modeling server (UMS):
  - a first database (10) containing the user data,
  - a second database (40) including feedback data, and
  - a third database (30) containing rules for the exchange of usage data, said rules defining said function.
4. The method of claim 3, further comprising the step of generating a prediction about preferences of a user in a specific domain by taking the user data associated to said user from the first database (10) and the feedback data associated to said user from the second database (40) and weighting said user data and said feedback data according to the rules contained in the third database (30).
5. The method of claims 3 or 4, wherein said UMS further comprises a fourth database (20) including data describing each application in said set ( $A_1, \dots, A_n$ ),
6. The method of claim 1, wherein said function is in the form of a bi-directional relationship, wherein any of said first and second applications is configured for accepting, refusing or negotiating said relationship.
7. The method of claim 1, further including the steps of:
  - valuating said usage data, and

- defining debit and credit values each said application in said set has in respect of usage data exchanged with other applications in said set.

5        8. The method of claim 1, wherein said applications are associated with respective providers and in that the method includes the step of causing at least one of said providers to produce a list of other providers to which usage data are to be provided on the basis of said function.

10      9. The method of claim 1, wherein said applications are associated with respective providers and in that the method includes the step of causing at least one of said providers to produce a list of providers from which information is to be acquired.

10. The method of claim 2, wherein said usage data further comprise environment data related to the users' current location.

15      11. A system for providing user modeling in media delivery networks, including at least one user modeling server (UMS) whereby a set of applications ( $A_1, \dots, A_n$ ) are adapted to exchange usage data via said at least one user modeling server (UMS), wherein said user modeling server (UMS) has an associated function for regulating exchange of usage data between any of a first application and a second application in said set ( $A_1, \dots, A_n$ ), wherein said function defines:

20      - whether said usage data are provided by said first application to said second application, and

      - a degree of trust acknowledged by said second application to said provided usage data.

25      12. The system of claim 11, wherein said usage data include  
      - user data related to the registered users and their profiles, and  
      - feedback data concerning the users' behavior.

13. The system of claim 12, wherein the user modeling server (UMS) comprises:

30      - a first database (10) containing the user data,  
      - a second database (40) including feedback data,  
      - a third database (30) containing rules for the exchange of usage data, said rules defining said function.

35      14. The system of claim 13, further comprising a user modeling component (UMC) (50) configured to generate a prediction about preferences of a user in a specific domain by taking the user data associated to said user from

the first database (10) and the feedback data associated to said user from the second database (40) and weighting said user data and said feedback data according to the rules contained in the third database (30).

15. The system of claims 13 or 14, wherein said UMS further comprises a  
5 fourth database (20) including data describing each application in said set ( $A_1, \dots, A_n$ ),

16. The system of claim 14, wherein the user modeling component (UMC)  
(50) comprises

10 - a set of user modeling modules (UMMs), each user modeling module  
being associated to an application of said set ( $A_1, \dots, A_n$ ) and containing the user  
data and the feedback data, wherein each modeling module is apt to generate a  
prediction about preferences of said user, and

15 - a merge component (MC) configured to merge the predictions about  
preferences from applications of said set ( $A_1, \dots, A_n$ ) and to weight said  
predictions according to the rules contained in the third database (30).

17. The system of claim 11, characterized in that said function is in the  
form of a bi-directional relationship, wherein any of said first and second  
applications is configured for accepting, refusing or negotiating said relationship.

18. The system of claim 11, wherein said applications are associated with  
20 respective providers and in that at least one of said providers stores a list of other  
providers to which usage data are to be provided on the basis of said function.

19. The system of claim 11, wherein said applications are associated with  
respective providers and in that at least one of said providers stores a list of  
25 providers from which information is to be acquired.

20. A media delivery network including a system according to any of  
claims 11 to 19.

21. A computer program product loadable in the memory of at least one  
computer and comprising software code portions for performing the steps of the  
method of any of claims 1 to 10.